

God's Delays are not God's Denials, Part 3 - Acts 25:6-8 – March 21st, 2010

- This is part three of a series titled; "God's Delays are not God's Denials." The Apostle Paul will rise from our text and attest to this truth.
- Paul has been in custody for two years now, and despite the delay in Caesarea, and the denial of justice, it's all providentially perfect.
- If you were to put a caption on these last four chapters of this amazing book of Acts, it would have to be; "God's Perfect Providence."

1. Man's way can't deny God's way (Verses 1-2)

- The chief priests and Jewish leaders present their false charges against Paul to Festus as the new Governor of Caesarea province.
- As we'll see next in verse three, they try to persuade Festus to see it their way because they have made an oath to rid the earth of Paul.
- Be that as it may, the Lord has already told Paul the way it's going to go, and as he had testified in Jerusalem, he will testify in Rome.

2. Man's plans can't deny God's plans (Verse 3)

- Paul's accusers plead with Festus to do them a favor and have Paul brought back to Jerusalem, as secretly, they planned to kill him.
- This plan will fail because they can make all the plans their wicked and deceitful little heart desires but its God plan that prevails.

3. Man's injustice can't deny God's justice (Verses 4-5)

- Festus responds to their plea to bring Paul back to Jerusalem by telling them that Paul is in Caesarea and that's where he's going.
- Once again, it looks like Paul will be denied justice however, because he has not done anything wrong, God will have the final word.

4. Man's lies can't deny God's truth (Verses 6-7)

6 After spending eight or ten days with them, he went down to Caesarea, and the next day he convened the court and ordered that Paul be brought before him. 7 When Paul appeared, the Jews who had come down from Jerusalem stood around him, bringing many serious charges against him, which they could not prove.

- v6 Upon his arrival in Caesarea ten days later court is back in session the very next day, and Festus orders Paul be brought before him.
- v7 Paul's back in court and the Jews who came from Jerusalem bring many serious charges against him, but could not prove even one.
- Why? Because the truth will expose the lie; in other words, man's lies cannot prevail over God's truth. It's a built-in protection of sorts.

Psalms 40:11 Do not withhold your mercy from me, O LORD; may your love and your truth always protect me. NIV

- The Proverbs are replete with this promise of protection from those who would bear false witness by spreading rumors and lies.

Proverbs 6:16-19 16 There are six things the LORD hates, seven that are detestable to him: 17 haughty eyes, a lying tongue, hands that shed innocent blood, 18 a heart that devises wicked schemes, feet that are quick to rush into evil, 19 a false witness who pours out lies and a man who stirs up dissension among brothers. NIV

Proverbs 19:5 A false witness will not go unpunished, and he who pours out lies will not go free. NIV

- In Proverbs 19 the ninth verse it gets even worse:

Proverbs 19:9 A false witness will not go unpunished, and he who pours out lies will perish. NIV

Proverbs 21:28 A false witness will perish, and whoever listens to him will be destroyed forever. NIV

- In John's gospel chapter eight, we have recorded some extremely harsh words from Jesus Himself as it relates to this:

John 8:44-46 44 You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father's desire. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies. 45 Yet because I tell the truth, you do not believe me! 46 Can any of you prove me guilty of sin? If I am telling the truth, why don't you believe me? NIV

- In other words, when you reject the truth, you will be susceptible and vulnerable and believe a lie from the Devil as the father of lies.
- This is the reason the Jewish leaders in Jerusalem were bearing false witness in spreading rumors and lies about their brother Paul.
- I find it interesting that the Holy Spirit would have Luke include in his record a detail in verse seven that they couldn't prove Paul guilty.
- It's as if the Apostle is echoing the very words of the Savior as we'll see in verse eight, when he boldly declares he's speaking the truth.

5. Man's laws can't deny God's laws (Verse 8)

8 Then Paul made his defense: "I have done nothing wrong against the law of the Jews or against the temple or against Caesar."

- v8 Paul presents his own defense by reiterating that he's done nothing wrong against the law of the Jews or against the law of Caesar.
- You sort of see frustration building in the Apostle Paul because he's caught up in this whole legal system and hasn't broken man's law.
- I think I would be grossly remiss to not address an often asked question as it relates to man's laws and God's laws for us as believers.

- In other words, when should we and how far should we go in standing up for our legal rights under the law as Bible believing Christians.
- First, it's important to know that as believers, we are never to sue other believers in the court of law. Consider Paul's letter to Corinth:

1 Corinthians 6:1-8 1 If any of you has a dispute with another, dare he take it before the ungodly for judgment instead of before the saints? 2 Do you not know that the saints will judge the world? And if you are to judge the world, are you not competent to judge trivial cases? 3 Do you not know that we will judge angels? How much more the things of this life! 4 Therefore, if you have disputes about such matters, appoint as judges even men of little account in the church! 5 I say this to shame you. Is it possible that there is nobody among you wise enough to judge a dispute between believers? 6 But instead, one brother goes to law against another-and this in front of unbelievers! 7 The very fact that you have lawsuits among you means you have been completely defeated already. Why not rather be wronged? Why not rather be cheated? 8 Instead, you yourselves cheat and do wrong, and you do this to your brothers. NIV

- Be that as it may, there may come a time when it is appropriate and necessary to exercise our legal rights when dealing with the world.
- This is what we see here with Paul. He hasn't broken any Jewish or Roman laws and he knows that they can't supersede God's laws.
- Please don't misunderstand the lesson of the text here. This certainly doesn't give us license to start pursuing litigation and sue people.

As one commentator said it; "There are times for a believer to claim his civil rights. A believer should be willing to suffer for the cause of Christ, but there is no virtue in suffering merely for suffering's sake. Where protection of the law exists and can be invoked without compromise or complication, it can be invoked. A believer ought not to resort to the law for every petty offense, but in matters where the alternatives are serious and the means of legal redress exist, it is not wrong to seek protection of the law."